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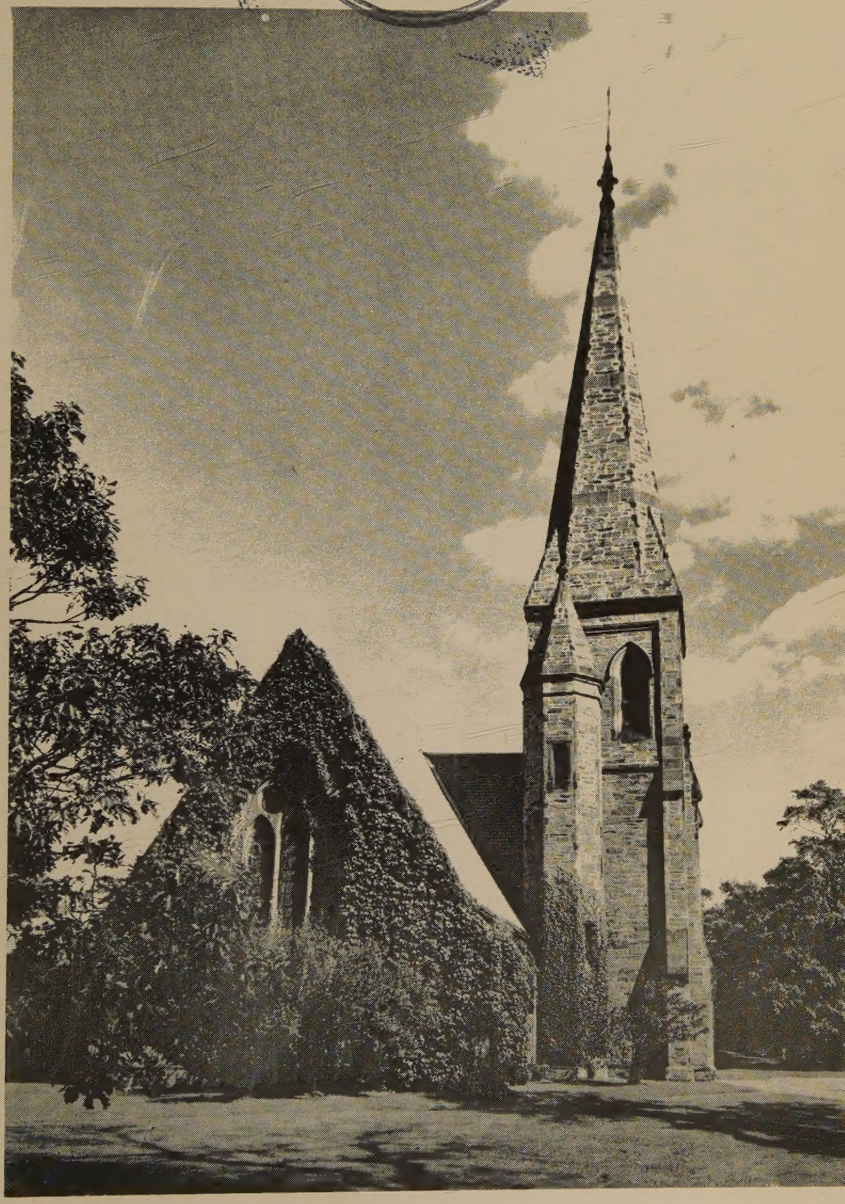

E T S JOURNAL

vol iv no ii Spring 1958

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The ETSJOURNAL is published three times a year by the students of the Episcopal Theological School. Individual copies: fifty cents. One year subscription: One dollar postpaid. Address: The Editors, 99 Brattle Street, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts.

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J.G.

THE TRINITY: ITS MEANING FOR TODAY

by Thomas V. Sullivan

He comes into a world of terror.

Where does he come from? Where is he? Where is he going to? He does not know, he does not ask. He knows only that he is hungry, he asks only to be fed and to be kept dry. Sometimes, when he asks, he gets his request; but as often as not, he remains hungry. he remains wet and dirty. He does not know or ask why; he endures his pain, and continues to cry; and in a while, he gets what he wants. At least this has been his experience in the past. But the future remains uncertain.

But the world remains one of terror. Never can he predict when catastrophe is imminent. "Life is like that." One's whole existence may be snatched away in a moment. A snowy day, a railroad train, impeded vision, and unexpected death for a hundred people.

It may be he who dies; or, even worse, it may be one on whom he depends: for love, for food, or for something else which he considers of importance. And he is left alone.

Or perhaps he belongs to a race outside the full protection of the law. A dark night: "Hey, you nigger! Hey, you Jew-boy!" Who knows what next? Lynching? Mutilation? Darkness and terror at least.

And not for him, only. His terror is your terror, and mine. Dachau, Little Rock, East Side, where ever there is a threat to life, to being - there is a threat to your life and being, and to mine. And wherever there is this threat, there is also a fear and a terror, which strike to one's heart; to one's very roots. Ans the question arises: What is this fear which is able to capture one so? Why is

fear? What does it mean? Why is man afraid to die? What is the meaning of suffering?

A strange way to come to God. But only in the dark places, so it seems, does one ask for light. Onl in the strait passage does one long for the broad and open sea. Only when Sputnil is traversing the heaven, does one ask what the meaning of the heaven is.

The most convincing demonstration of the existence of angels is the existence of demons. And it is as we survey the horror, and sorrow, and terror of life, of existence, that we demand to know who could have made it all; how can finite man be responsible for all the evil that exists?

Why is it that God's power is known in acts of destruction?

The voice of the Lord is powerful
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars,
the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
The vioce of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the Lork shakes the wilderness,
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forests bare;
and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

In times of distress?

Still falls the Rain -
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss -
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails upon the cross
Still falls the Rain

With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed
to the hammer beat
In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet

On the tomb:
Still falls the Rain . . .

In time of war?

Lord, when thou didst go forth from Seir,
when thou didst march from the region of Edom,
the earth trembled,
and the heavens dropped,
yea, the heavens dropped water.
The mountains quaked before the Lord,
you Sinai before the Lord, the God of Israel . . .
From heaven fought the stars,
from their courses they fought against Sisera.
The torrent Kishon swept them away,
the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon.
March on, my soul, with might! . . .
So perish all thine enemies,
O Lord!
But thy friends be like the sun
As he rises in his might . . .

Always, in times when man finds himself at hopeless odds with existence, he looks for a power greater than himself; and he finds it in the unexplainable, the terrible, the dreadful; in the depth, or the abyss, of being. And this is the kind of tragedy in which man finds himself enmeshed today: starving dogs whimpering through space; race fighting against race, nation against nation; evil exuberant on a cosmic scale. He reads Isaiah; "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they man know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else.

I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things . . . Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."

Even though he may never have heard the word God, the existence of evil in the world drives man on to try to find a meaning of it. And so he enters into the dimension of ultimate concern. Gods, says Paul Tillich, are beings who transcend the realm of ordinary experience in power and meaning, with whom men have relations which surpass ordinary relations in intensity and significance. Out of his terror, man calls upon a power greater than himself, and finds God. Man finds God from his own need.

But this experience which I have tried to describe phenomenologically and from the viewpoint (more or less) of an existentialist, is not the finding of the God of revelation. One does not find HIm: He reveals Himself. And the problem which contemporary man faces is that of reconciling the God of revelation with the God which he intuits in his existential situation: the God of darkness, the God who creates evil, the God of terror.

This is perhaps the major problem in the Old Testament. The writers were very much aware of the power of God, and of his holiness; but how could this kind of God be a God of loving-kindness, and righteousness, and justice? How could this God, so wholly other than man, so awful and so fearful, be one to whom man might draw close, on whom man might rely? How can the God of inter-stellar space be a God with personal interest in me?

The doctrine of distinctions within the Godhead arose out of the experience of the Christian community: it arose out of the experience of the Christian community knowing Jesus, and being driven to the conclusion that he was

and is God. Certainly, already the Jewish community knew (to some extent) the absolute God, the judge of the nations, the fascinosum tremendum; and likewise it knew (likewise to some extent) the concrete God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who Brought Israel out of the land of Egypt. But, in Jesus, Christians knew the Godhead in the way one human being knows another. This was the complete concretization of the divine reality: the actualization of the Godhead in human existence. The absolute, the ultimate, the universal, was made flesh. This is the paradox and the doctrine of the Trinity.

> "Trinitarian monotheism is not a matter of the number three. It is a qualitative and not a quantitative characterization of God. It is an attempt to speak of the living God, the God in whom the ultimate and the concrete are united. The number three has no specific significance in itself, although it comes nearest to an adequate description of life-processes. Even in the history of the Christian doctrine of the trinity there have been vascillations between trinitarian and binitarian emphasis (the discussion about the position of the Holy Ghost) and between trinity and quaternity (the question about the relation of the Father to the common divine substance of the three personae). The trinitarian problem has nothing to do with the trick question how one can be three and three be one. The answer to this question is given in every life-process. The trinitarian problem is the problem of the unity between ultimacy and concreteness in the living God. Trinitarian monotheism is concrete monotheism, the affirmation of the living God."

In Jesus, men met an element of the divine life which had meaning, structure, form; in philosophical language,

the logos. He was the revelation of the depth, the mysterious abyss. In him was the concrete reality of that which was known before only partially, only in a veiled way. This experience of the community we may call koinonia. This fellowship, or agape, is the heart of the Christian Gospel. Man perceived in Christ a relationship to the deity which man had not perceived before; and through Christ, man found himself also sharing in this relationship.

We have so far assumed the reality of the ultimate abyss, which, I have said, man discovered in moments of fear, danger, terror; and I have assigned this abyss the name "God". We have said that the experience of the community was that in Christ, there was a relationship to the abyss which had order and meaning. There was in Christ, Life, which proclaimed itself to be Divine Life. The question arises whether this is the same Divine Life which is found in the abyss. The Catholic teaching is that such is the case; the life in Christ is essentially the same as that in the Father. It is, indeed, able to be distinguished; but it is "homoousios", or consubstantial. On the other hand, Christ is a distinguishable person from the mysterious abyss, which is the Father. In saying this, we do not intend to pin ourselves down to the meaning of person which we find in everyday speech. The original usage was a protective, or defensive, doctrine, in its explication. To say that Christ, the logos, is a person, is to say that He is such that htere is a relationship possible (indeed, that there is a relationship) between Him and the Father. Let me take an analogy from law. Here a person is a natural person (human being), or body of persons, or in a wider sense, an aggregate of property, that is recognized by law as the subject of rights and duties. The essential thing about the definition is that there is

some sort of relationship, despite the fact that there may be no personality such as we see in a human being. Indeed, in law, one human being might be three different persons: John Doe, a natural individual; John Doe, trustee for Richard Roe; and John Doe, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a corporation sole. These three persons may enter into relationship with themselves such that John Doe individually promises to pay the Trustee the amount of $1,000. and John Doe, as Trustee, engages to convey certain real estate to John Doe, Roman Catholic Archbishop and corporation sole, in consideration of the said payment, and he, as Archbishop, agrees to accept the conveyance.

In Christ, man perceived an element of the Divine Life. This was man's expereince. It was an element of the Divine Life characterized by wisdom, by order, by meaning; it was an element which proclaimed that it brought man unto the Father, and that it knew the Father. To say that it was different from the Father would indeed be polytheism, completely contrary to the Judaistic tradition, and to the express words of S. John's Gospel. To say that they were identical would be to deny the concrete, actualized reality of the existence of Jesus. And so Christianity says that it is the same Divine Life, but that the Life of the Son is able to be distinguished to the point that it has a relationship with that of the Father.

But this Divine Life did not cease in the world with the death of Jesus. With Him, there is a new life in the community. He has died; but his love continues. Life, and meaning, and strength, remain within the koinonia; and an element of power (dynamis) which, as Tillich has said, creates the correlation of miracle and ecstasy in which revelation can be received. "The Christian knows the Father, and he knows the Son; he knows the Father through the Son, and he shares in Their

relationship. This relationship is a new life, marked by a correlation of miracle and ecstasy, and is a distinguishable life of fellowship. It proceeds from the Father and the Son, and it leads to Them. To say that this life is not distinguishable from that of Jesus, would detract from His humanity; to say that it is completely different, would either, on the one hand, deny the divine nature of this new life, or, on the other hand, involve tritheism. And so, the Three fold formula of Divine Life.

For the doctrine of the Trinity, then, the empirical evidence consists of the earthly life of Jesus Christ, and all that has sprung from it in the new life of communion with God into which Christians have been taken. In the examination of this evidence, the Christian will attempt to grasp what must be the nature of the God who makes himself known in this way. The doctrine is thus an inference to the nature of God drawn from what the Christian believes to be the empirical evidence given by God in his revelation of Himself in the history of the world. That is to say, the evidence we have is of the economic Trinity, the God who acts in the world, and reveals himself in the world; but if this is truly a revelation (and only faith can say that it is), then it must be a revelation of God the way He truly is; that is, the distinction of persons are essential to God, they are immanent within Him.

The significance of the doctrine for today rests in the nature of man, ond of our world. Man has come to be very much aware of the reality of evil, of sin, of tragedy. Man cannot accept a God of a Sunday-School or picture-book level. He does not believe in a God who will reward good with good, and evil with evil. War, poverty, disease, the lust for power, have taken "the lovliest and the best/That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest." A.E. Houseman

expresses the pessimism which is characteristic of these years:

Now, and I muse for why and never find the reason,
I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun.
Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season:
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.

Ay, look: high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation;
All thought s to rive the heart are here, and all are vain;
Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation -
Oh, why did I awake? When shall I sleep again?

In answer, the Christian boldly asserts that God accepts responsibility for the existence of evil, and has Himself provided such a remedy for it that in the end it shall be found that its existence in the time-process has contributed to the fulfilment of the purpose for which that process was created. This is the divine revelation in the Christian Gospel.

The doctrine of the Trinity is basically the affirmation that within the straitened existence within which we labor, God's power has become manifest. It is the affirmation that God is holiness; he is the abyss, the unknowable principle; and yet, paradoxically, he also has been manifested within this world, within the form of a human being. He is the tremendous mystery, the transcendent power, which commands the ultimate fear and reverence; but this very same principle of life was incarnate in human life, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the real paradox, that comforts while it mocks; that infinity has been encompassed.

And the presence of eternal life is not confined to the person of Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. Christian experience consists in encounter with a personal Lord.

In the spirit, God meets with us, and deals with us personally. It is the living person of God, present in his Spirit, that unites us with Christ, and through him deals personally with us. The presence of God's Holy Spirit is known, not as an alternative to, but as a mode of, the presence of the living Christ which forms the constitutive fact of Christian faith - a fact that is enshrined in the primitive Christian confession, "Jesus is Lord." The presence of the Spirit does not supersede the presence of Christ; His work is effectually re-presented throughout history - and this is through the action of the Spirit.

O gladsome light, O grace
Of God the Father's face,
The eternal splendor wearing;

Celestial, holy blest,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Joyful in thine appearing.

NIHIL OBSTAT

by Peter Slater

Would it be worth a bomb or two
To find out what your Creator would do
When you and all your brothers were no more?
The human race may end, distorted into
Atomic imbeciles of misfit particles
Curiously joined together in ghoulish contortions
Slowly corroding in a chain of nuclear reactions.
But He would still be there, you say.
The universe would still be there, I say,
So what then would He do with this mess
Which we have made of His creation?

Perhaps the world shall be ruled by pigs
In nineteen eighty-four, pigs made
Intelligent by this flow of nuclear fission,
Intelligent enough to destroy themselves also
While God sits in His heaven, locked out
Of the world of pigs - stoned out if He
Dare to enter it, or, more likely in this
Enlightened Age, quietly put away because,
Poor thing, He thinks the world should be
Good, when everyone knows that it cannot be
So - never, at least, unambiguously good.

Will He then try a new creation? Please No,
For this world tells Him plainly that
He has failed, failed to establish any
Rapport with the ways of us on earth -
Failed even to establish His own identity
Where everything must be identified if it
Is to be allowed that it exists at all.
Let Him then keep His love to Himself
Lest His well-meaning and creative meddling
Lead to another round of drawn-out misery
Dying slowly in all ugliness and distortion.

It would be more merciful to throw all
Things into nothingness, than to let
Them roast in hell or squirm on earth.
We do not care ourselves if we must die
Tomorrow, but think of all our children
Who may not be like us because of what
We have done with our Enlightenment.
Is it fair for your Creator to make them
Suffer the consequences of our mismanagement
So that their limbs no longer live for love?
Let them be nothing. It would be more merciful.

Then may your Creator say: "Poor children
Do you think that all this life is dust
That what you do with dust determines
The destinines of future generations? I
Would not leave their future in your care.
I shall be merciful and turn you to
Nothingness, but have you not read that
The dust was not life until I breathed
My Spirit into it? So shall I breathe into
The dust you make of your children: they too
Shall have their chance. You must agree that's fair."

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH IN JAPAN

BY Stanley E. Horst

The belief of the Japanese people in many gods overwhelms the imagination of an American Christian who is reminded occasionally by the Church and his culture that belief in One God is the only acceptable belief. What has happened in Japan as a result of the meeting of Shinto, the indigenous religion, and Christianity? Has the "Way of Christ" been at all disturbing to "The Way of the Gods?" In reply to these questions two main points will be brought to the reader's attention: (1) the nature of Japanese religion; and (2) the special nature of the Church's mission in Japan.

(1) Throughout Japanese history, Shinto, the native religion, has been a finely woven fabric preserving several main strands of belief and practice. It is a curious combination of primitive nature worship, the veneration of ancestors and heroes and a militant, but often soft-spoken belief in the eventual triumph of Japanese nationalism through economic and cultural supremacy. The primary strand in the fabric which is belief in the spirits lurking in trees, rivers, mountains and animals has been characteristic of many, if not all ancient cultures. Secondly, reverence for one's ancestors has been a standard feature of Oriental piety. The third strand, the expression of national consciousness in culture and religion, demands closer examination.

Japanese religion has produced a creation myth which traces the Imperial Family back to a Sun-goddess and the Japanese islands with their ancestral clans back to the creative action of various gods and goddesses. This myth has come to be interpreted, especially after the effective restoration of Imperial power in 1868 as meaning that any military program, economic policy, political practice or cultural understanding, once given the Japanese

stamp of approval, becomes part of that great and revered tradition the propagation of which is the solemn duty of each Japanese citizen.

Polytheism allied with the State dictum regarding national origins, informs directly or indirectly every aspect of common life and organized religion in Japan. Religion in Japan consists of paying allegiance to the gods enshrined in the national heritage, but supremely enshrined in the Imperial House.

The assimilative genius of Shinto has grown side by side with the emphasis on Imperial Shinto doctrine which was so influential until the close of the Pacific War in 1945. At every curcial point in Japanese history Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity have been forced to subordinate themselves to the native religion. Any program or practice advocated by one or more of these three religions has been either taken over or merely tolerated by the State religion if it were to its advantage. For example, Shinto has been lax traditionally in the field of ethical concern outside the family group. Therefore one area in which the Church of Christ might have expected reasonable success was in the care of the sick and the outcast in Japanese society.

However, the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 stands as the most powerful example of Shinto authority regarding ethical standards. In that proclamation the Emperor enjoined his subjects to live in loyalty, truth and harmony for the advancement of national aims. Learning was to be pursued, humane endeavors realized, the public good advanced and the true spirit of reverence toward one's superiors observed. Charity toward the ill and socially unacceptable was to be practiced as a means of showing the world that Japan was a truly modern nation. In obedience to the Rescript, western knowledge and

techniques were pursued, those who later gave their lives for Japan were revered as gods (kami) and the Emperor was regarded as "manifest Deity."

Of cours since the end of World War II Shinto has been disestablished as the State religion and the Emperor has been revealed in his actual manhood. Nevertheless, because of its appeal to the history and imagination of the Japanese, Shinto continues to be a living force.

(2) The Anglican Church in Japan today is represented by the Nippon Seikokai, "The Holy Catholic Church in Japan." Out of a population of nearly 91 million persons, the Seikokai claims a membership of approximately 40,000. The size of the Church now nearly equals its size just before World War II.

Many Japanese experience a partial conversion through reading the popular or technical publications of the Church or the public press dealing with the Christian Faith. Often interest in the Faith is aroused by conversation with a priest or consecrated lay person. More often it is a sort of intellectual dilettantism that brings many educated Japanese to the Church. The number of persons enlisted on the parish rolls each year is often matched by the number who drop out of the Church. In other words, deep conversion and the nourishment of the spiritual life are only partly realized by the Church in Japan (as elsewhere.)

By far the largest number of converts to the Church is to be found in the cities of the land. Shinto as it affects the urban dwellers is only indirectly influential. They witness the yearly round of shrine festivals and the frequent use of Shinto priestly blessings at the dedication of new buildings or public works projects. Some sophisticated Japanese remember the childhood festivals or prayers said at the home god-shelf (kamidana.) But the majority of Japanese <u>believe</u> nothing

serious concerning their gods. Putting aside normal human hopes and fears, prayer to and knowledge of the gods consists of a formal clapping of the hands and bowing the head before a shrine. The need in the cities is for clear thinkers and converted evangelists, native or foreign, clergy or lay, who can extend beneath the surface of skeptical but polite questions about the God Christians are said to worship. The mission of Christians here as everywhere is to bring the sincere inquirer to God through the heart of Christ in His Church.

The situation in the rural areas of Japan is even less hopeful, but just as challenging. Evangelism depends almost entirely on knowing one's people and sharing daily experience with them. The seed of the Word must be sown widely; in many actual instances of road-side preaching (the most effective method in rural Japan), conversion has taken place two to five years after hearing the preacher. Futility incarnate is the habil of sitting quietly in one's study waiting for a prospective Christian. More often than not the visitor is more interested in meeting a foreigner, practicing his English grammar or sipping a cup of tea than he is in hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The evangelist in Japan has to go out away fro his sanctuary and meet people in the rice fields, at the bath house, or in the streetside shops. Japan will only come to the Gospel as the Gospel is given to the people. Hard as it may seem, however, Shinto to the poor farmer now means almost everything religious (save burial which usually is a Buddhist rite.) Deeply engrained is belief in gods multitudinous.

In both rural and urban ministries a knowledge of Japanese language and culture is indispensable for the foreign missionary. Odd as it may sound, there are today a few foreigners who do not

know the Japanese language and are being called on to minister to all the needs of the people nevertheless. Constantly replenished encouragement, humility and knowledge are required of both foreign and native clergy. Understanding and prayerful sympathy are required of those who support the mission to Japan but are not called on to fight in the front lines.

The future of the Anglican mission in Japan depends on native clergy trained in the discipline of the spiritual life. It is very difficult for a japanese citizen to embrace a foreign religion, especially Christianity. To accept One God as seen in the face of a Palestinian Jew is virtually to throw away one's national spiritual citizenship. One no longer acknowledges the power of the national gods for good, but worships a foreign God, so to speak. The men who are needed in Japan today are those who can give a reason for their total dependence on the One God.

Both foreign and native clergy have important functions to perform in the Church's mission to Japan. The foreign priest must be able to advise and enlarge the vision of his Japanese companion by his study and understanding of European and American theology, doctrine and practice. The native priest needs, however, not so much to study as to be an active pastor to his flock. It is only the occasional American, Canadian, British or Japanese priest who is both a gleaner of relevant material and a faithful interpreter of the Gospel to the people of the Church and those outside the Church. The work of the Church in Japan today seems necessarily to rely on native and foreign clergy because Japan itself is the meeting place of East and West.

Excessive love of Japanese ways of doing things or overzealous love of the ceremonies and traditions

of the Western Church are both impediments to the task to which the Church is called in Japan. The barriers that culture and Church lay down in the way of the eventual triumph of the Gospel in Japan can be overcome only in Christ the Lord of all peoples of the earth.

ESCHATOLOGY IN MARK

by John Snow

This paper must begin with some general comments on the entire Gospel of Mark, and some observations on Markan criticism. The specifically Markan criticism I have read (Taylor, Grant) have given a great deal of attention to sources and to the text in purely historical terms, but none of it has given serious attention to what Mark has done with his material, to Mark's literary-theological plan. There is much talk among Biblical scholars about the Gospels being not histories of the life of Jesus, but kerygmatic essays, yet in their work these same scholars seem more interested always either in attempting to reconstruct a chronological scheme for Jesus' ministry and chasing from there into discovering the "historical Jesus", or in conjecturing on what Jesus taught, or what the Early Church preached, or Who Jesus thought himself to be, etc. .

I feel that the focus of attention in a study of Mark should be, not the kerygma of the Early Church contained in Mark, not the historical Jesus, his ontology and teaching, but the Markan Kerygma in its totality. The Gospel according to St. Mark is an account of Mark's understanding and experience of Christianity in its earliest, freshest and most pure form. From the mass and tangle of available material, a great religious genius selected what was for him significant in the light of his own experience of Christ and His Church, and arranged it in such a way as to give this experience its greatest thrust, and its greatest reality. I am convinced that thorough study of Mark from this purely gestalt point of view would leave hardly an irrelevant sentence in the entire Gospel. In this respect, Mark is more nearly like John than like the other Synoptics,

both of which have their patch-work quality. Mark, with the rarest exceptions, is all of a piece.

For this reason, I feel that any attempt to extrapolate all verses relevant to a single aspect of th Gospel, such as its eschatology, and to draw conclusions from them, is to do violence to the whole, and to end up inevitably with a theory more ingenious than valid. The plan of this paper is to exegete broadly and with varying degrees of emphasis, all the material in one section of Mark (chapters four to nine) in order to show how mutually dependent are the themes of Messiahship, cosmology, and eschatology within the Markan Scheme, and then to draw some tentative conclusions on the Markan eschatology itself. The choice of this section rather than another is dictated by the limits of time and space, since here the bones of the schematic structure are more exposed than in the later more specifically historical chapters. All the material in this section is aimed at defining Jesus' Messiahship in eschatological terms. Or, to put it more accurately, this section of the Gospel shows how Jesus, by parable and miracle defined his unique Messiahship before openly revealing himself to the disciples.

Let us begin with a tentative theory: in Chapter four we find in cryptic form three Messianic-eschatological statements which are to be clarified in the succeeding situations and events, and "made manifest" in Peter's Confession. The statements are these:
(1.) " And unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God:
(2.) but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing, they may hear and not understand: lest haply they should turn again, and

it should be forgiven them."
(3.)"For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made sectet, but that it should come to light."

Let us examine these statements in context. Beginning at 4:10 after the Parable of the Sower we learn that those who "were about him with the Twelve" as well as the twelve themselves, are given the "mystery of the Kingdom of God". It is already assumed that they are "inside" since Jesus refers to "them who are without". Yet paradoxically no one present understands the parable. This surprises Jesus ("Know ye not this parable?"), but hardly seems to disconcert him. There proceeds an explanation of the parable which, though Dodd et al may be right in asserting that it is not Jesus' explanation, is certainly Mark's, for verses 21 and 22 have no immediate relevance without it. Although the parable itself may be intrinsically eschatological in meaning, for Mark the eschatological statement is in verse 22. (statement 3 above). Paul, in a brief aside about the parousia (ICor. 4:5), uses very similar terms. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

Here is a good example of Mark's method. Statement 3 refers directly to the explanation of the parable just given, but also to the coming revelation of himself as the Christ, and perhaps to the final Advent as well. Every direct communication to a person or group has direct personal and existential relevance, as well as cosmic and eschatological meaning. What Jesus says to the Disciples in words and parables he illustrates in miracle and action. In Mark as nowhere else in the New Testament is the meaning of the Incarnation made startlingly clear.

Immediately following the last of the three basic statements are the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly and the Parable of the Mustard Seed. Both are, by the common consent of modern scholars, eschatological parables. The Kingdom is not like the seed in either parable, but like the whole process of natural growth, containing in its beginning its destined end. Mark's is a Gospel where God's omniscience and omnipotence, God's iron and unshakeable purpose stand out with an almost Joban intensity. Man can choose, but God does nothing to make the choice easy. In Mark one feels most strongly the influence of the East, where a broken will and a defeated reason, a state of despairing passivity, are the preconditions of choice. Statement 2 is the hard teaching of the oriental mystic, but unlike the oriental mystic the Jesus of Mark supplements his teaching with act after act of pure love.

Following the series of parables, the disciples are subjected to the storm on the lake and Jesus' easy, almost casual quelling of the angry elements. The disciples ask in a fever of anxiety precisely the question Jesus would have them ask: "Who then is this . . . ?" (4:41). But he provides no answer. Instead he proceeds to the three most spectacular of his healing miracles; the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac, where he shows once and for all his control over the powers of Satan, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, showing his power over death, and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, a miracle pointing up his disassociation, as man, from the power working within him. The fact and the unique form of his Messiahship becom clearer and clearer.

It is at this precise moment in his mission that Jesus presents to his disciples the hardest teaching of all, the fact of his simple humanity. "Is this not the Carpenter?" (6:3). Following so closely on the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, this question explains Jesus' "failure" in his own country. Jesus' power selects only those whose trust in him is total in the face of his manifest humanity. Jesus is preparing the disciples for his teaching about the Cross.

The mission charge to the Twelve for the first time suggests an eschatological urgency. Every thing in Jesus' manner hints at a momentous and world shaking event coming at any time, but one completely unarticulated, as his Messiahship is unarticulated. There is no need for extra clothing or for money, no need to waste time on hostile individuals or communities. And still in a fog as to Jesus' identity, they accept the bare fact of his authority and do what he tells them.

Before dismissing 6:14-29 as an irrelevant "interlude" it is necessary to remember that the Herodians are associated with the Pharisees in a plot to destroy Jesus. This section is a telling plank in the case being built against the Pharisees, for 6:14-29 presents a picture of decadence and depravity unrivaled in literature. It is also interesting to note that from the comment about the "carpenter" and Jesus' ascetic demands upon his disciples, Mark switches us directly to the "highest" level of Jewish society. The contrast is brilliantly effective, and serves to bring out in stark relief the conditions for greatness in the Kingdom which Jesus is later to set before the disciples.

The return of the twelve is followed immediately

by the feeding of the five-thousand. The existential relevance of this event is carefully shown by Mark. The people are hungry; the place is remote and far from sources of food supply. The disciples and Jesus agree that the people should be fed, and, indeed they are fed. But they are fed not practically, as the disciples suggest, but miraculously. Jesus for the first time performs a miracle within the prophetic form of classical Old Testament eschatology. (Isaiah 55:2, 25:6). The miracle shrieks his Messiahship, its beginning in the historical sense and its end in the eschatological sense.

Despite the clarity of the miracle's meaning, the disciples retain their remarkable ability to see and not perceive, to hear and not understand. Jesus drives home the point of their blindness and deafness with a series kof even more pointed miracles, the first of which, his walking on the water, is not altogether free of humor. Mark comments glumly but significantly on the disciples new heights of anxiety, ". . . for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened." (6:52).

After an intensification of his healing ministry in Gennesaret, Jesus again comes into conflict with the scribes and Pharisees, but this time not on the relatively trivial level of Sabbath observance. In his most scathing diatribe, giving specific examples and quoting chapter and verse from Isaiah (29:13) he accuses the scribes and Pharisees of leaving the commandment of God and holding fast the tradition of men. He defines this conflict in the parable on what defiles a man, and when the disciples ask to have the parable interpreted he replies (7:18), "Are ye so without

understanding? Perceive ye not . . . ?" There is by now a constant repetition of the words seeing, perceiving, hearing and understanding, and the remaining miracles before Peter's Confession can only be understood in terms of the objectification of the subjective attitudes essential to entering the Kingdom, the existential acting out of essential truth. It is also important to note that every miracle from this point to the Confession can be discovered in Isaiah's Messianic passages.

First Jesus clarifies the meaning of the remaining baskets of crumbs after feeding the five thousand by his encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman. In this first gentile healing story, the Messianic role takes on its true Universal nature. The twelve baskets signified their possession by the Twelve Tribes the "children" of Israel, but since the children let them fall from the table even the gentiles may partake. In the Messianic banquet of Isaiah 55 we find the following verse coming directly after the feeding: "Behold, you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you." (55:5). Mark stresses the Messianic meaning by having Jesus say to the woman, "For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter." (7:29).

The cure of the deaf mute ends with the multitudes saying, " . . . he maketh even the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." In Isaiah 35:5, 6 we find, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy." There follow in quick succession the feeding of the four thousand with seven baskets of crumbs left over (emphasizing the mission to the seven gentile nations), the ironic demand of the Pharisees for a sign which

Jesus ironically says there will not be, and then in 8:14 again the matter of bread.

It is easy to say that Mark was too naive to use symbolism, and indeed, he does not in the Hellenistic, sophisticated sense that John does. The bread is bread always in Mark, as Jesus is a man, and the blind physically incapable of sight, or the possessed almost clinically insane, or the Pharisees typical, timeless priestly types. But somehow, another, deeper reality, a shaping, ordering, commanding force gives every object, every event, a new dimension. The deeper meaning cannot be abstracted but it is there. Suffice it to say that the bread here is a touchstone, a catalyst, setting off an almost organic change in the relationship between Jesus and the disciples. It brings forth the cryptic comment on the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod, the pathetic "dialogue" among the disciples about the bread shortage, and finally Jesus' significant and articulate anger at this dialogue. (8:15-18). "Why reason ye, because ye have not bread? do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" One is reminded of Isaiah 63:17: "O Lord, why dost thou make us err from thy ways and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not?" This prayer expresses, like the one soon to follow in Mark 9:24 (I believe, help my unbelief") the spiritual attitude necessary to receiving the Kingdom. It is the response towards which Jesus has been lovingly but relentlessly forcing the Disciples. But the reaction of the Disciples to the sheer cosmic splendour of his methods is Mark's most profound piece of psychological realism. This is how a man reacts, faced with a crisis of cosmic proportions. Here is the underlying cause of all literalism, all

externalism; the hardening of the heart of the man who does not trust the God which is revealed to him. Here is the logical dead end of the stiff-necked people, the leaven of the Pharisees at work.

Mark supplies one more preparatory miracle before Peter's Confession, the restoring of the blind man's sight in two stages. In Mark there are only two restorations of sight ot the blind and each heralds momentous revelation. In this first case we have the "doublet" of the two feedings explained as the two stages through which the disciples have passed to acquire the spiritual vision necessary for Peter's confession. The next question Jesus asks the disciples is "Who do men say that I am?" The replies cover the general on dit already mentioned in the section on Herod's court. Then Jesus asks, "Who say ye that I am?" and Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ."

At last, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak. Seeing for one moment becomes perception, and hearing becomes understanding. The scales fall from Peter's eyes, and he finds himself in the Kingdom in that queer, "almost" way that defies the finitude of our vocabulary. Indeed, Peter finds that through having submitted himself to the will of Jesus "blindly" he has been, as Jesus hinted (statement one) in the Kingdom all the time, since it is the Christ that he has been following.

The crisis past, Jesus proceeds to teach in explicit terms and in detail what is expected of his followers, and what their expectation is to be. Peter's rebuke, called forth by Jesus' prediction of his Passion, is answered by Jesus in almost the same words with which he attacked the Pharisees in 7:9: " . . . for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." But he prefaces this statement with the stinging

command, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" and here, perhaps, we have a key to the meaning of the eschatology of Mark.

The leaven of the Pharisees, the things of men, the hardening of the heart, the deaf ears and blind eyes are the internalization of the demonic forces one sees operative objectively in madness, sickness, natural upheavals, physical blindness and deafness, and ultimately, in death. Both realms, the internal and the external have been under Satan's sovereignty until this time. The realization of the Kingdom promised to many of the Disciples before they taste death is the personal internal triumph over the demonic forces which will result in a vision capable of seeing in the person of Christ the ultimate cosmic triumph over Satan and the perfection of all creation in judgment and love, the coming of the Son of Man "in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels" (8:38).

In the Kingdom of God, as in the Gospel of Mark, the distinction between object and subject, existence and essence, fact and truth, body and spirit, action and thought, thing and symbol, time and eternity, has been removed, and all things and events alike are ordered by the loving power of God.